

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: John-Mark Hack, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy  
(502) 564-4627

### **State Agricultural Development Board Approves \$201,045 for Value-Added Apple Cider Processing Network**

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, chaired by Governor Paul Patton, voted today to approve \$201,045 in two grant requests submitted by the Evans Orchard in Georgetown and the Jackson Orchard and Nursery in Bowling Green. The \$111,500 award of state agricultural development funds to Evans Orchard will go to help renovate an existing tobacco barn to house a state of the art cider production facility for all Kentucky orchards that want high quality fresh squeezed cider. \$89,545 in state agricultural development funds goes to Jackson's Orchard to construct a facility to house similar kinds of processing equipment.

The state board investment represents the first individual farm projects approved for state funding by the Agricultural Development Board. The effort represents the first step in building a statewide network of cider producers, and has been endorsed by University of Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable specialists and the Kentucky Horticulture Society.

The new facilities will meet all federal, state and county codes for food production and provide a market outlet for other cider producers. The projects will cost a total of \$179,090 in Bowling Green and \$223,000 for the Georgetown orchard.

Eleven orchards are committed to processing their apples through the facilities, and will work together to create a Kentucky branded product. Project organizers are committed to finding other Kentucky apple producers interested in the value-adding venture.

The network has a commitment from a chain of convenience stores in Kentucky to serve as the initial marketing outlet for their product. Governor Patton praised the Board's action to boost the efforts of apple producers across the state to explore value-added alternatives to replace lost tobacco income.

"This action means that the Evans Orchard and the Jackson Orchard and several others across the state will be able to better meet the needs of their customers in marketing their cider this year and in the future. While this money will be spent on facilities and equipment, it is an investment in an aggressive group of producers looking for income alternatives,, in their agricultural diversification efforts, and in the future of agriculture in our state," said Governor Paul Patton.

The award was made as one of twenty-three projects approved by the Board during its meeting today. The Board approved a total of \$593,423 in state level projects, including the orchard projects, and \$1,265,877 in a variety of county-level programs.

“This grant will allow us to expand to the point where we are self-sustaining,” Evans Orchard President Kevan Evans said. “Our operation will be efficient enough to demonstrate to farmers that there are alternatives to tobacco.”

Staff of the Agricultural Development Board will meet soon with the recipients to work out the details for the award.